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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Friday, September 29, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Fruit Jellies for Fall". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

If you've been so busy this summer that you haven't had time to put up all the jelly you'd like for this coming winter--I have some pointers today that may have special interest for you. I've some tips for making jelly from fruits in season now--from the crab apples and other tart apples, the quinces, and the Concord grapes that may be ripening in your own backyard.

According to expert jelly makers of the Federal Bureau of Home Economics--the autumn fruits I mentioned have everything it takes to make a good jelly.

First of all, they have good flavor. And just as important--they have sufficient amounts of pectin and acid. These two substances--along with the sugar you add--make up the threesome that's needed to make jelly "jell".

And now--some brief high spots of making these fruits into jelly.

"One of the chief things to remember is that overcooking is one of the worst things that can happen to jelly. For overcooking destroys good fruit flavor and color. And it cuts down on the power of the pectin--sometimes so much that the jelly never sets as it should.

"So, keeping this in mind--work with small batches of fruit at a time. That way you can carry the jelly process through promptly. By a small batch of fruit, I mean not more than 8 cupfuls of juice at a time. Or, if you'd rather have it in terms of the fruit itself--not more than 8 pounds of apples, or quinces, or grapes--weighed after they are prepared for cooking.

"Another way to keep the cooking time of jelly to a minimum is to add only enough water to the fruit to cook it soft. Still another way is to use a large, flat-bottomed pan for all cooking. This permits rapid evaporation and speeds up the jelly making.

"It also helps to cut down the cooking time of jelly to combine fruit juice and sugar for the final boiling--without preheating the juice. Experiments have shown that it is not necessary to concentrate the juice first by boiling--as many jelly makers used to do."

But that's enough of general jelly making suggestions. Now, I'll begin at the beginning and give you a short play-by-play account of what you have to do to an apple--or a quince--or a grape to turn it into good jelly.

"First of all--look the fruit over carefully. It's a good idea to have part of the fruit ripe--for flavor; and to have part of it slightly underripe--because at that stage there's more acid and pectin in the fruit.

"Wash all the fruit thoroughly. Throw away the stems and blossom ends of quinces and apples--but leave the cores in, because they contain much pectin. Also leave the skins on. But cut the fruit into small, uniform pieces so the pectin can be quickly extracted into the juice.

"Next step is to add water and to boil the fruit soft. The amount of water varies. For normally juicy apples and crab apples--add 1 cup water for every pound of fruit. That's a pound of fruit as it is weighed all cut up and ready to cook. Apples and crab apples will cook soft in from 20 to 25 minutes.

"So will quinces. But although they are cooked in only 20 to 25 minutes they need twice as much water as do apples or crab apples--about 2 cups to a pound of prepared fruit.

"Grapes take less time and less water. Crush them first to start the juice to flowing. Then you may not have to add any water at all--or anywhere up to 1/4

of a cup to a pound of fruit. Grapes will be cooked in from 5 to 10 minutes.

"As soon as fruit is soft--pour it into a jelly bag. Let it drip. Then press out the last bit of juice and strain it all again to make it clear."

And that brings us up to the final and critical act in jelly making--the combining of juice and sugar and boiling it to the jelly stage.

"The amount of sugar like the amount of water you added will vary with the fruit. Crab apples will need about 1 cup of sugar for every cup of juice. Quinces need only about 3/4 cup sugar. Grapes need something inbetween 3/4 and 1 cup of sugar for every cup of juice.

"Stir the sugar into the juice until it dissolves. Then boil the mixture rapidly until it reaches the jelly stage."

Here's the test for jelly--the same one that grandmother's mother taught her. From time to time, hold a spoonful of sirup into the air. When the last bit of sirup no longer runs off the spoon in a steady stream--but hesitates--then forms two distinct drops that sheet together-----then you have jelly.

And that is the time that all good jelly makers take the sirup off the stove, skim it, and pour it at once into sterilized glasses.

In short form, that pretty much completes the jelly story--from fruit beginning to happy jelly ending. But I'd like to add just one short paragraph to the story of grape jelly.

"Makers of grape jelly are sometimes unpleasantly surprised when they open it to find that crystals have formed in the jelly--giving it a gritty texture. One way to prevent these harmless cream of tarter crystals is to let grape juice stand overnight in a cold place before combining it with the sugar. Pour off the juice next morning--then strain it again."

Those are all the jelly notes I have for today--except for one final word of warning in case you are overly ambitious. It's not a good plan to make up more than a year's supply of jelly. For the jelly loses some of its bright fruit color and its flavor if it is stored for long.
